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ABSTRACT

This module is part of a set of management and supervisor training (MAST) materials developed by the Department of Energy for the Waste Isolation Division. Its stated purpose is to enable trainees to perform an accurate assessment of personal abilities, ethics, and standards. The first section of the module is an introduction that includes a terminal objective and opening remarks intended to focus the trainees' attention on the subjects discussed in the module. Most other module sections begin with a list of enabling objectives. Many sections contain "critical incidents" or real-life occurrences at the Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant that relate to the section topic. Some illustrate effective management practices, and some illustrate ineffective ones. Each critical incident includes "lessons learned" information. Section topics include the following: personal strengths and weaknesses, personal impact on employees, ethics, and stress. A list of "smart moves" is included near the end of the module. Contains 9 references and a practice test. Answers and feedback for the test are provided. (YLB)

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ED 395 148

Waste Isolation Division (WID)
Management and Supervisor Training (MAST) Program

SELF-ASSESSMENT

MAS-102

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Trainee SS#:_____

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CE 071 571

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A. MODULE INTRODUCTION

Terminal Objective

Upon completion of this module, trainees will be able to perform an accurate assessment of personal abilities, ethics and standards.

Mastery of the terminal objective will be demonstrated by scoring 80 percent or higher on the module examination.

To lead or attempt to lead without first having a knowledge of self is foolhardy and sure to bring disaster and defeat.

Machiavelli

At the Waste Isolation Division, we regularly evaluate our processes, products, people and performance. We have come to recognize the value of organizational self-assessment. When we take a long, hard and objective look at our organization and respond appropriately, improvement and growth occur.

Organizational self-assessment is, however, only one factor in the improvement equation. Study after study shows that effective managers and supervisors continually assess and seek to improve their own knowledge, skills and behavior.

This module is about personal self-assessment; organizational self-assessment is covered in MAS-114, "Quality." This module is designed to help you:

- Identify and act upon your strengths and weaknesses
- Recognize your impact on others
- Evaluate your standards and ethics
- Handle stress and prevent burnout

B. PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Enabling Objective

Upon completion of this section, trainees will be able to:

1. State the importance of identifying personal strengths and weaknesses.
2. Identify the person self-assessment instrument available through the MAST Program.
3. Identify good practices in personal self-assessment.

The most powerful influence on a person's life is the view one holds of oneself.

Robert and Dorothy Bolton

Consider the following case studies:

- John aspired to have his boss's job. When his boss transferred to another organization, John was promoted to his boss's position. Things turned sour from the start. In his new position, John was required to make frequent presentations and speeches. He had always feared public speaking. John eventually learned to perform these speaking assignments, but never felt comfortable in doing so. He ultimately began to loath his job.
- Senior management requested Mary to take on a project that would require extensive analysis of problems. Mary balked because the project was "outside her field." The project was assigned to Joan, another manager. Later, Mary observed the project activities and kicked herself; Joan was getting to perform the task that Mary liked to perform best--problem analysis.
- Bill was interviewed for a position that represented a huge promotion for him--a lot more money and responsibility. However, during the interview process, Bill determined that the job wasn't a good match for

him. He wouldn't be able to use the techniques that had made him successful. He withdrew his name from consideration. Later, Bill said, "It was tough to turn down, but it was one of the smartest things I've done. I would have been miserable in that job and probably would have failed."

John and Mary made career-limiting mistakes. Bill avoided making a career-limiting mistake. The difference among these managers is that John and Mary had not adequately identified their strengths and weaknesses, while Bill had. The old adage, "know thyself" is particularly relevant to the managerial role. If you have not determined your strengths and weaknesses, your chances for improvement and growth are limited.

You--not your boss, your employees, your co-workers--are in the best position to identify your personal strengths and weaknesses. The key to identification is complete honesty. If you are ready to take an objective look at yourself, complete the comprehensive personnel career profile, "If You Knew Who You Were...You Could Be Who You Are." Copies of this profile may be obtained from the MAST coordinator. This profile is not for the marginally interested: to get value out of the profile, you will need to devote a number of hours to its completion. The profile will give you a thorough understanding of your strengths, weaknesses, style, and career interests. Whether you complete the profile is left entirely up to you--its contents are not the subject of MAST test items.

Whether or not you use the profile or one of the many other self-assessment instruments, the following principles apply when performing a personal self-assessment.

Good Practices

- Be true to yourself

  -To generate useful information, personal self-assessments must be founded in honesty.

- Take your time

  -A hasty self-assessment will typically produce superficial results, such as "I have good work habits." When completing a self-assessment instrument, take numerous breaks.

- Be specific

-Be specific in defining your strengths and weaknesses. "I frequently daydream when employees are talking to me," is much more valuable than, "I have poor communication skills."

- Focus on behavior

  -Behavior is much easier to change than opinions and attitudes. "I don't provide enough positive feedback to employees" is easier to change than "I think the value of feedback is overrated."

- Accept the results

  -None of us are perfect. Yet, many individuals are devastated or angered when personal self-assessments show they have areas in which they can improve.

- Seek input from others

  -No self-assessment instrument is perfect. If you have reason to question the results of a self-assessment instrument, ask for input from others, such as your boss, employees and co-workers. Example: "The assessment instrument indicates that I sometimes make critical decisions without obtaining input form others. Have you observed that behavior?"

- Use the results

  -A self-assessment is worthless unless you take action upon the information. Establish realistic personal goals to improve your weak areas and maximize your strengths.

C. PERSONAL IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES

Enabling Objectives

Upon completion of this section, trainees will be able to:

1. Identify the impact of managers on employees.
2. State good practices for positive impact on employees.

It would be difficult to overestimate the impact that managers and supervisors have on their employees. Your employees will invariably "key in" on your words and actions and emulate your behavior. If you arrive at work one-half hour before starting time, most of your employees will begin work early too. If you act stressed in the presence of your employees, most of your employees will soon be stressed. If you express disdain for a work process, don't be surprised when many of your employees express disdain for the work process to their peers.

Like it or not, you are your employees' primary role model. This relationship can be the key to your success or the cause of your failure--the choice is up to you. Let's look at the behavior of three managers and the impact of their behavior on their employees.

- Ralph arrives for work 15 minutes late each day. He makes and receives frequent personal calls at work. He spends a portion of the day gossiping about the personal lives of fellow managers. He openly expresses his disdain of "all of those bureaucrats over in DOE."

  -What time do you think Ralph's employees arrive for work?
  -How many personal calls do you think Ralph's employees' make?
  -How active is the gossip mill in Ralph's department?
  -What do you think Ralph's employees' think of the customer?

- Nicole tells her employees that they must attend all employee meetings. Nicole doesn't attend, however, because she has a busy schedule. She admonishes her

employees for their absentee rate. Her absentee rate is higher than the division average, but she reasons, "I work so much overtime." In a staff meeting she requests each employee to develop an improvement goal. When an employee asks her what her improvement goal is, she states, "I haven't had time to think about it, I've been so busy."

-How seriously do you think Nicole's employees will take attending all employee meetings, reducing the absentee rate, and setting improvement goals?

- Ann arrives to work on time and never leaves until quitting time. She works hard during the course of the day. She never attends to personal business at work and avoids the gossip mill. She likes to be the first person in her section to complete all-section assignments: first to complete required training, first to set individual goals and objectives and first to turn in individual assignments. She sets stretch personal goals for herself and holds herself to high standards. She maintains outstanding relations with her DOE counterpart.

  -Based on this information, what kind of performance would you expect from Ann's employees? How do you think the performances of Ann's employees will compare with Ralph's and Nicole's employees?

Good Practices

To maximize your positive impact on your employees, follow these practices in conducting your job:

- Set high standards and goals for yourself
- Ensure that your daily behavior is beyond reproach
- Avoid negatively criticizing the customer and other organizations
- Be the first to change--others will follow
- Avoid the "do as I say, not as I do" syndrome

D. ETHICS

Enabling Objective

Upon completion of this section, trainees will be able to:

1. Define "management ethics."
2. State the sources for ethical standards.
3. Identify good practices in ethical decision making.
4. Given a scenario, identify the impact of ethical behavior on the job.

Management ethics refers to the standards of acceptable conduct within and outside of the organization. Many of these standards are specified formally in documents such as the following:

- Westinghouse Code of Business Ethics
- Waste Isolation Division Employee Handbook

Many of these codified standards are based on law. For example, it is illegal to rig bids on government contracts. Other codified standards concern behavior that may be legal, but is not acceptable to the organization. An example of this would be excessive absenteeism. There is no law prohibiting excessive absenteeism, but the code of behavior in the employee handbook identifies excessive absenteeism as an unacceptable practice.

We will not reiterate the formal codes of behavior in this module. It is the responsibility of each manager to read and apply the corporate and division ethics standards. Information and guidance about formal ethical standards are contained throughout the MAST modules:

- Purchasing and Accounting (MAS-116)
- Environmental Protection (MAS-125)
- Industrial Safety (MAS-123)

- Radiological Protection (MAS-124)
- Administrative Requirements (MAS-112)

Other ethical standards are not codified, but are still part of the organization's culture. For example, in most organizational cultures, the following managerial behavior would be considered unethical:

- Taking sole credit for the ideas and accomplishments of others
- Criticizing your boss in front of your employees, colleagues or in the community
- Adopting a "winning at all costs" approach to work
- Performing any activity with the intent of harming (discrediting) a fellow employee

It would be impossible to capture all of an organization's ethical standards in code. Organizations such as the Waste Isolation Division assume that managers bring basic ethical principles, such as a sense of right and wrong, to their positions. They assume that managers and supervisors neither want nor need an environment in which every possible unacceptable behavior is defined in writing.

Good Practices

It goes without saying that you should always adhere to the corporate and division codes of ethics. However, during the course of your career as a manager or supervisor, you will face many problems and decisions that are in the "grey area"--situations with ethical implications for which no clear course of action is defined. When you enter these uncharted waters, consider the following advice from Saul W. Gellerman of the University of Dallas School of Management, "When in doubt, don't." Unethical conduct frequently occurs in the rush to take action in response to a problem. If time permits (and it almost always does), analyze the problem thoroughly. Involve others in your deliberations if possible: unethical behavior is usually the result of decisions made in solitude. Ask yourself, "What would happen if everyone else did what I am proposing to do?" If the consequences would be negative, the course of action is probably unethical. Ask yourself, "How easy will it be to explain my actions to my boss?" If it would be difficult or

impossible to tell your boss about your course of action, the course of action is probably unethical.

In summary, it would be impossible to discuss all of the ethical conduct issues in this or any other document. We close by saying that managers and supervisors should become intimately familiar with the codes of ethics and always consider the ethical implications of their behavior.

E. STRESS

Enabling Objective

Upon completion of this section, trainees will be able to:

1. Define "stress."
2. Identify factors that may cause stress.
3. Identify the impact of negative stress.
4. Identify the value of positive stress in the workplace.
5. Identify methods of reducing stress.
6. Identify signs of burnout.
7. State methods to handle burnout.
8. Given a measurement tool, identify your level of stress.

STRESS..."some it breaks, like brittle metal. Others become flexible, like tempered steel, bending without breaking, becoming stronger and purer. People, like steel, cannot become truly tempered without feeling the fire of stress and burning tribulations."

Elizabeth F. Jones

Everyday we are exposed to situations that cause tension and alter our normal equilibrium or balance. This is called stress. Is all stress bad? Not necessarily. It depends on the type of stress.

You are assigned a project that has a due date in three weeks. As the date approaches, your tension builds. You become more stressed. Your body responds with elevated blood pressure and perhaps loss of sleep. After you meet the deadline your body returns to normal. You may even experience a feeling of elation.

Positive stress is a catalyst for success. The energy that is generated helps us to meet goals. Without positive stress, nothing would happen because there would be no energy to move forward. When all the elements for success--information, resources, energy and enthusiasm, and a support team--are present, you can meet the demands.

However, if other areas are demanding attention as well as the project, you may begin to feel that your schedule is out of control. Even after the project deadline has been met, your body continues to respond with feelings of tension.

This is negative stress. It can cause stomach trouble, fatigue, depression, heart trouble, headaches, chronic pain and illness, and high blood pressure.

Many times we are the cause of our negative stress. We set unrealistic goals for ourselves. We have situations in our lives that we cannot control. Do you suffer from negative stress?

The questions on the next page will help you assess your stress level. See how you do. Circle the number that best describes your answer to the question.

	NO	YES
1. Do you have difficulty fitting everything into your schedule?	1	2
2. Do you know how to relax when tensions build up?	2	1
3. Have you changed jobs, married, or had a child in the last year?	1	2
4. Do you think you have control over your life?	2	1
5. Is there any stress in your life you think is helpful?	2	1
6. Are you a passionate person?	2	1
7. Do you like your job?	2	1
8. Do you feel burnt out by your job?	1	2
9. Is your life taken up with burdens and responsibilities?	1	2
10. Do distractions keep you from doing what you want?	1	2
11. Do you feel pressures to spend more time with your mate, spouse, or children?	1	2
12. Do you feel guilty about taking time for yourself?	1	2
13. Is your health in the good to excellent range?	2	1
TOTAL EACH COLUMN		

GRAND TOTAL ___ + ___ = ___

Total each column using the number you circled. Add together the totals from each column. Use the Skill Chart on the next page to find out how adept you are in managing your part of the world.

Skill Chart

Rating	
	13-16 Strong Stress Management Skills
	17-23 Generally OK, but under pressure could go either way
	24-26 In need of skill improvements. May have trouble negotiating the jungle.

ESSI Systems StressMap

To explore in depth your sources of stress and personal response to them, pick up from Organizational Development the ESSI Systems StressMap. The StressMap has three separate sections: the Questionnaire, the Scoring Grid, and the New Directions Workbook. This system allows you to recognize your strengths and weaknesses, burnout areas, and gives you ways to enhance your personal health and performance.

Handling Negative Stress

Lets take a look at how to handle negative stress:

- Figure out what causes stress for you

  -Here are some of life's biggest causes of stress,

  Work hours that are too long
  Botched work project
  Moved
  In-law trouble
  Large loan, debt, mortgage
  Loss of job
  Divorce
  Death of family member
  Serious accident, illness, or surgery
  Serious problem with child
  Digestive illness
  Financial problems
  Pregnancy
  Marriage or reconciliation
  Dissatisfied with job
  Addition to the family
  Christmas
  Loss of a close friend
  Change jobs

Unfaithful spouse

- Talk to someone--Friend, counselor, boss (anyone that can keep a confidence) that can:

  -Listen and share
  -Help you regain proper perspective on the situation
  -Help with finding a solution or give advice
  -Make you think

- Be positive

  -The light at the end of the tunnel is not necessarily a freight train
  -Use the stress for positive results

- Decide what you can control and what you can't

  -Work on those things you can control
  -Set aside those things you can't control
  -Know when to pull back
  -Keep a perspective

- Develop an interest in other things that are totally different from what causes the stress

  -Other people's problems
  -Hobbies
  -Television
  -Club/church events
  -Sports

- Laugh, laugh, laugh

  -A great stress reliever

- Relaxation techniques

  -Yoga
  -Relaxation exercises

- Develop a regular schedule

  -Eating/sleeping at regular times

- Exercise

- Read helpful books

  -Learned Optimism by Martin Seligman and others

Burnout

Burnout is the exhaustion of physical or emotional strength. This condition can occur when a person's expected rewards from work are not met. Burnout can occur at any point in a career. So if you feel yourself becoming apathetic, irritable, disappointed, or not getting the job rewards you need--beware. Here are some things you can do:

- Take the problem seriously

  Don't try to rationalize the problem away. Ignoring the symptoms will not make it better.

- Be realistic in your expectations

  Don't expect to accomplish more than is possible. Further, do not expect people and assignments to always rise to your level of enthusiasm and urgency.

- Reorganize your goals

  This goes hand in glove with being realistic in your expectations. If your goals cannot be achieved, then perhaps you need to adjust them.

- Rotate assignments

  As Jerry Bishop stated, "Varying assignments and routines so that a worker can spend at least part of the time on work with a definite end, or 'closure' is helpful because long periods of working without visible results makes a fertile environment for burnout."

- Alter working conditions

  Make a change in the routine. Sometimes just a little thing, like varying the time you eat lunch, can help.

- Try new activities

Work at getting a more balanced life. Take up a new hobby or sport. Try new foods. Make new friends. Travel, or get involved in the community.

- Change your career

  Sometimes the change must be extreme. Many people have successfully changed their careers. But, don't quit. Plan the change.

- Get to know yourself and others

  Tune in to yourself--who you are, what makes you feel happy and successful. Get to know other people by listening when they are talking about their needs, concerns, and desires.

- Pat yourself on the back

  If no one else gives you a pat on the back for a job well done, give yourself one. This "I deserve it" approach can help.

- Practice relaxing

  Long walks are great--they are physically relaxing.

- Maintain a growing edge

  Look for new ways to do things. Keep a positive attitude toward developing and improving yourself.

One word of caution: every job has some type of dissatisfaction. Do not convince yourself after reading this section that you are burning out. If you think burnout is a possibility, take some of the actions we've discussed. If your burnout continues, seek assistance through the Employee Assistance Program.

F. SMART MOVES--THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

1. Complete the career profile, "If You Knew Who You Were...You Could Be Who You Are!"

2. Review the Westinghouse Code of Ethics.

3. Take the StessMap and then take action to improve areas where you're out of balance.

4. Establish realistic personal goals to improve your weak areas and to maximize your strengths.

5. Avoid negatively criticizing the customer and other organizations.

6. Ask yourself, "What would happen if everyone else did what I'm proposing to do?"

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H. PRACTICE TEST

1. Eddie was under a lot of pressure and seemed to be very stressed. He was starting to have problems with high blood pressure and headaches. His manager suggested he seek help by talking to someone. Was this a good suggestion?

   a. Yes--talking to someone he trusts may help Eddie solve his problems

   b. Yes--talking to someone is the only proven means of reducing stress

   c. No--admitting that he has problems to someone could negatively affect his career

   d. No--talking about his problems will likely increase his stress

   (F.5)

2. Jaime usually spent an hour or so for lunch and occasionally left a little early. What impact, if any, would Jaime's behavior have on her employees?

   a. No impact--employees understand that managers have certain privileges

   b. Positive impact--Jaime was demonstrating that she was just one of the employees

   c. Negative impact--Jaime's employees are likely to copy her inappropriate behavior

   (C.1)

3. Don was interested in developing his managerial ability. However, when Don received the results of a self-assessment test, he took no action. Was this a good approach?

   a. Yes--just having the results of a self-assessment is all that is required

   b. Yes--Don's boss can best decide how to develop Don's strengths and weaknesses

   c. No--Don needed to develop personal goals to improve weak areas and maximize his strengths

   d. No--Don should have discarded the results; a personal self-assessment is no longer considered to be effective by management professors

   (B.3)

4. Joe has gotten progressively more apathetic about his management position. Activities Joe used to enjoy now seem like drudgery. Joe realized he was experiencing burnout. Which of the following might help Joe?

   a. Ignore the situation; it is just a passing mood

   b. Put in more hours at work; this will keep Joe's mind off his problems

   c. Try new activities, such as a hobby or sport

   (F.6)

5. A manager has a report due to his boss's boss. The data obtained for the report wasn't very impressive. The manager left some data out to present a better picture. The manager feared his boss would ask him about the data omission. He didn't want to explain the omission. Was the manager's behavior ethical?

   a. Yes--the manager's action benefits his organization, therefore, it must be ethical

   b. Yes--the omission really is not of a concern

   c. No--if the manager found it difficult to explain his actions to his boss, his behavior is probably unethical

   (D.4)

6. Sidney decided to take advantage of the self-assessment tool, "If You Knew Who You Were...You Could Be Who You Are." Because she was very busy, Sidney devoted 45 minutes to the effort. Was this a good way to perform the self-assessment?

   a. Yes--she obviously already has a good idea of what she's about; a self-assessment will not offer Sidney any benefits

   b. Yes--research shows that managers should complete self-assessment tests as quickly as possible

   c. No--she needed to take her time to get accurate results

   (B.3)

7. A manager feels stressed. Things seemed as though they are slipping out of control. Which of the following might help him reduce his stress?

   a. Work on things that he can't control and set aside those he can control

   b. Work on things that he can control and set aside those he can't control

c. Work on everything--those he can and cannot control

(D.4)

8. A new requirement came out requiring all employees to sign out when leaving their work area. A manager immediately started signing out each time she left her work area. Was this a good practice?

a. Yes--the rest of the manager's employees are likely to follow her example

b. Yes--the only really important person to keep track of in a department is the manager

c. No--the manager was showing up the rest of the employees

d. No--managers shouldn't worry about details like signing out

(C.2)

9. Joan's employees devised a new work process that would save her organization a lot of time and money. In her monthly report, she took personal credit for this innovation. Was this a good practice?

a. Yes--managers deserve personal credit for any work performed by their employees

b. Yes--the number of employees make it impossible to recognize each individual accomplishment

c. No--her actions were unethical; she should have given credit where credit is due

d. No--managers should never list accomplishments in a monthly report

(D.3)

10. A manager wanted to set goals for improving his effectiveness. One of the goals was to "write better." Was this a good goal?

    a. Yes--broad goals like this are the most effective type of goal

    b. Yes--broad goals are better than specific goals with target dates

    c. No--personal improvement goals need to be more specific than the manager's goal

    d. No--setting personal goals is not an acceptable management practice

(B.3)

I. ANSWERS AND FEEDBACK FOR THE PRACTICE TEST

1. a. Yes--talking to someone he trusts may help Eddie solve his problems

2. c. Negative impact--Jaime's employees are likely to copy her inappropriate behavior

3. c. No--Don needed to develop personal goals to improve weak areas and maximize his strengths

4. c. Try new activities, such as a hobby or sport

5. c. No--if the manager found it difficult to explain his actions to his boss, his behavior is probably unethical

6. c. No--she needed to take her time to get accurate results

7. b. Work on things that he can control and set aside those he can't control

8. a. Yes--the rest of the manager's employees are likely to follow her example

9. c. No--her actions were unethical; she should have given credit where credit is due

10. c. No--personal improvement goals need to be more specific than the manager's goal

If you scored 80 percent or higher on the practice test, you are ready to take the module examination; please proceed to Organizational Development.

If you scored less than 80 percent on the practice test, please re-read the module and take the practice test again. If you still have questions , contact the Team Leader, Professional Development, or the Manager, Organizational Development.